

**ROMANTIC LOVE IN NICHOLAS SPARKS' *THE BEST OF ME* NOVEL
(2011): A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**



**Compiled As One Of The Requirements To Complete The Strata I Study Department Of
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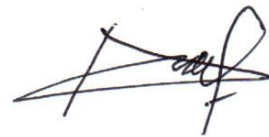
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The researcher

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Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi cinta romantis antara Dawson Cole dan Amanda Collier dalam novel *The Best of Me*. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan dua jenis data, yaitu data utama dari penelitian ini novel adalah novel *The Best of Me* dan data yang kedua dari adalah teori termasuk referensi dan data-data yang berkaitan dengan penelitian ini. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah hubungan antara Dawson Cole dan Amanda Collier dapat dikategorikan sebagai cinta yang romantis kerana sudah memenuhi unsur-unsur cinta yang romantis. Unsur-unsur cinta yang romantis yang terdapat didalam penelitian terdapat keintiman, gairah, dan komitmen antara Dawson dan Amanda.

Kata Kunci: Cinta Romantis, Sosiologi Sastra, *The Best of Me*.

Abstract

This research aims to identify the romantic love between Dawson Cole and Amanda Collier in the novel *The Best of Me*. This research is qualitative research. This study uses two types of data the main data from this research is the novel *The Best of Me*, and the second data from the theory, including references and data related to this study. This result of the research shows that the relationship between Dawson Cole and Amanda Collier can be categorized as romantic love because it fulfils the elements of romantic love. The elements of romantic love in this study are intimacy, passion, and commitment between Dawson and Amanda.

Keywords: Romantic Love, Sociology of Literature, *The Best of Me*.

1. INTRODUCTION

Romance is an expressive and pleasant feeling of emotional attraction towards others related to love. In the context of romantic relationships, love usually implies a strong expression of romantic love or a deep and strong desire for an emotional or romantic relationship. Love is one of the most valuable things that anyone can get from God. When love has arisen, it will be deep and cannot be understood and understood because love arises by itself. The meaning of love is a feeling that can make us feel happy, sad, safe and comfortable. Love, of course, can make people feel joy and sorrow at the same time when we

try to get happy together. Feelings of love can make us realize how valuable we are and that someone is precious to protect us. Love does not just a word because love is far more valuable than the most expensive treasure in the world. The emergence of love for a woman and a relationship will appear. A relationship and a basis of love experienced by women and men will create a romantic relationship. Romantic relationships can be caused in a relationship that we walk. Romantic relationships that sometimes include children's characteristics to add food commonly called adolescents and can also be experienced by people who are already growing up. Romantic relationships can start from a friendship. It becomes a higher level by building a love relationship between one party and another because feelings of love arise from mutual attention and high interaction with others. (Collins 2003, Furman & Collins2008, Furman & Shaffer 2003). Romantic relationships, many writers write about it including Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare, Sense and Sensibility and Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen, Outlander by Diana Gabaldon, Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bront, Gone With the Wind by Margaret Mitchell, Withney, My Love by Judith Mcnaught, A Knight in Shining Armor by Jude Deveraux, The Prince Bright by Willian Goldman and The Best of Me by Nicholas Sparks. One of the novels that developing the issue of romantic love is *The Best of Me* novel. The author finds a previous study examined The Best of Me novel can be categorized into two parts: literature and translation. The first part there are seven categories reviewed *The Best of Me* novel in the literature (Etami, 2016) is (Andup, 2015) is (Mandey, 2019) is (Djakaya, 2016) is (Putri, 2014) is (Krisanta, 2016) is (Bestya, 2018) is. The second part of a previous study examined *The Best of Me* novel in translation (Iqbal, 2015) is.

In this study, the author's lessons about how romantic love is in The Best of Me novels. The reason the writer studied romantic love in *The Best of Me* novel is to identify the characteristic of romantic love in *The Best of Me* novel, To describe how the romantic love depicted in *The Best of Me* novel, To reveal the underlying reasons why romantic love that specifically addressed by the author in *The Best of Me* novel. So, readers understand the characteristics of romantic love in *The Best of Me* novel. Readers understand how romantic love is described in *The Best of Me* novel and understand the reasons behind romantic love discussed explicitly by the author in *The Best of Me* novel.

In this research, the writer uses the triangular theory of love by Robert J. Stenberg. Triangular of love is a theory of love. According to Stenberg (1999: 119), love has three components,

namely intimacy, passion, and commitment. According to Stenberg (1986: 124), romantic love is a combination of intimacy, passion, and commitment.

2. METHOD

In this research, the writer used a qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem with words based on building a complex, holistic picture, reporting detailed informants' views, and conducting in a natural setting. (Creswell, J.W: 2014). In this research, the writer used two data, namely the premier and secondary data. This research's premier data is *The Best of Me* novel, and secondary data from this research are related to material or references. This research's object is *The Best of Me* novel, written by Nicholas Sparks and published in 2011. The writer reads *The Best of Me* novel several times to get a more profound knowledge about the novel and determine the novel's character to collect data. All of them need to get the focus of the object of the novel.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1 FINDING

3.1.1 The Characteristics of Romantic Love

There is some characteristic of romantic love, namely intimacy, passion, and commitment. Based on this novel's story, there are 2 characteristics of romantic love in *The Best of Me* (2011) novel, namely intimacy, passion, and commitment.

3.1.1.1 Intimacy

According to Sternberg (1998: 1), passion is a relationship that involves feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bond. Intimate Relationships between Partners. The component of intimacy refers to feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bond in loving relationships. So, including feelings that can provide a sense of warmth and affection in having a romantic relationship. Intimacy in building relationships is evident between Dawson and Amanda in this story. The first kind of love that influenced Dawson for the first time he fell in love with Amanda was love that was infatuated. According to Sternberg (1986), infatuated love is defined as love at first sight. Love is crazy about most feelings

of sexual love that appear for the first time. . In this Finding, the intimacy can be divided into two-part, namely feeling and action.

3.1.1.1.1 Feeling

3.1.1.1.1.1 Liking

Amanda is always waiting for Dawson when he works at Tuck's place, and she still likes Dawson as she watches him doing his work.

"She trailed her fingers along the bench where she used to sit for hours, watching as Dawson leaned over the open hood of the fastback, occasionally cranking the wrench, his fingernails black with grease. Even then, his face had held none of the soft, youthful naivete she saw in others their age, and when the ropy muscles of his forearm flexed as he reached for another tool, she saw the limbs and form of the man he was already becoming." (Sparks, 2011: 52).

Amanda also likes Dawson's physical appearance. She describes Dawson is handsome as it is said in this statement:

"He was tall and lean, with dark hair that fell over darker eyes, and she'd known even then that he would become only more handsome as he grew older." (Sparks, 2011: 53).

Also, she describes Dawson's voice as well in the following sentence:

"Like Tuck's, his voice was almost always soft, his demeanour calm." (Sparks, 2011: 53).

Dawson as well, he likes Amanda, as he describes in the following statement:

“Even from a distance, she was more beautiful than he remembered, and for what seemed an endless span of time, he couldn’t say anything.” (Sparks, 2011: 66).

Not enough with that, he added again how beautiful is Amanda with the word ‘remarkable beauty’.

“The years, he realized, had been more than kind: Since he’d seen her last, she’d grown into a mature and remarkable beauty.” (Sparks, 2011: 67).

3.1.1.1.2 Loving

A couple can fall in love with each other when they can’t argue for a long time. They always believe that it is better to spend time without arguing at all. As for Dawson and Amanda, it can be found that they are fall in love with each other.

“They argued as well, and then Dawson caught a glimpse of her fiery nature. Their disagreements weren’t constant, but they weren’t infrequent, either; remarkably, no matter how quickly things flared up, they almost always ended equally fast.” (Sparks, 2011: 29).

3.1.1.2 Action

3.1.1.2.1 Hugging

The physical activity of Dawson and Amanda is not often described in the story.

“They embraced for a long time, holding each other close in the waning sunlight, and for an instant he thought he felt her tremble.” (Sparks, 2011: 68).

3.1.1.2 Passion

Passion is a relationship that involves feelings and desires that lead to physical attraction, romance, and sexual perfection. Passion refers to a source of motivation that can arouse passion in having a romantic relationship. The desire component also leads to romance, physical attraction, sexual enhancement, and related phenomena in love relationships. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that Dawson and Amanda still have the desire to be together. They have carried out Their passion for some actions as an effort to get together and unite. It was seen through Dawson's desire to always hang out with Amanda, someone he loved, and Amanda's desire to meet and gather with Amanda after years of separation. Dawson's love did not disappear because it was considered a love that was infatuated. Instead of fading away, Dawson's love grows more intense and intimate. That happened when Dawson committed to being with Amanda.

Moreover, Dawson wants to spend most of his time only with Amanda. The feeling of physical attraction that arose when Dawson first fell in love with Amanda was finally combined with the presence of meaningful intimacy that Dawson's love was not only physically attracted to each other but also emotionally bound. In this Finding, passion can be divided into physical attraction, romance and Sexual Perfection.

3.1.1.2.1 Physical Attraction

Dawson falls for Amanda because of her physical attraction, such as her laugh, her smile, and just everything she is doing, he falls for her. It is found.

“She had a quick, unbridled laugh, and when she smiled there was a mischievous hint about it, as though she knew something that no one else did. Her hair was a rich honey blond, her eyes the color of warm summer skies, and sometimes as they scribbled equations into their notebooks, she

would touch his arm to get his attention and the feeling would linger for hours.” (Sparks, 2011: 27).

Dawson loves the little things Amanda did.

“Or how she used to perch on the bench while he worked on his car in Tuck’s garage, arms wrapped around her drawn-up knees, making him think that he wanted nothing more than to see her sitting just like that forever.” (Sparks, 2011: 28).

Amanda always had Dawson’s attention as he always makes sure to slip his arm when they sit together.

“They’d wander down to the creek and Dawson would slip his arm around her while they sat on one of the low-slung branches of an ancient live oak.” (Sparks, 2011: 29).

3.1.1.2.2 Romance

How romantic their feeling for each other when Amanda feel strong just because Dawson is with her.

“Here it was easy to remember how strong she’d felt when she was with Dawson, and how unique and beautiful he’d always made her feel. She could recall with utter clarity her certainty that Dawson was the only person in the world who really understood her. But most of all, she could remember how completely she’d loved him and the single-minded passion with which he’d loved her back.” (Sparks, 2011: 52).

And of course, how romantic the story to think the future together with the one they love.

“..., but at the time nothing mattered but shooting stars and the warmth of his body and the gentle way he held her close, as if he couldn’t imagine a future without her.” (Sparks, 2011: 53).

3.1.1.2.3 Sexual Perfection

When Dawson suggested to give up on their relationship, he wants Amanda to be happy and does not struggle with everything that happens in their relationship. But as Amanda leaned into him, resting her head on his shoulder and told him that she's happiest when she's with him, and it happens when both of them shows their love for each other.

"Later that night they made love for the first time. And for the next two decades and beyond, he carried those words and the memories of that night inside him, knowing that she had been speaking for them both." (Sparks, 2011: 31).

3.1.2 The Depiction of Romantic love

3.1.2.1 The Character of Figure

This character can be categorized into two-part, namely the main character and supporting character. The main characters is Dawson and Amanda, and the character keeping them is Tuck.

3.1.2.1.1 Dawson Cole

Dawson is a man who is very affectionate and loyal to his first love. Dawson was honourable to Amanda because he didn't stop loving her, and he still showed her care and affection for her even after he broke up with her. Dawson's loyalty can be seen from his willingness to love Amanda. He doesn't even date other people because he can't replace Amanda's position as his true love. Therefore, Dawson's loyalty was shown through direct speech that occurred between him and Amanda.

"Even on a date?" she quizzed between bites.

"I don't really date," he said.

"Ever?" He began to cut his steak.

"No." "Why not?" He could feel her studying him as she took a sip, waiting. Dawson shifted in his seat.

"It's better that way," he answered. Her fork paused in midair. "It's not because of me, is it?" He kept his voice steady.

"I'm not sure what you want me to say," he said. "Surely you're not suggesting ..." she began.

When Dawson said nothing, she tried again. "Are you seriously trying to tell me that you, that you haven't dated anyone since we broke up?" (Sparks': 69-70)

From the conversation between Dawson and Amanda, it can be seen that Dawson has not changed since they broke up, which means that Dawson's feelings are still the same for Amanda. Besides, the reason why Dawson's feelings for Amanda do not change is reinforced by Amanda's thoughts towards him.

3.1.2.1.2 Amanda Collier

Amanda is a generous woman who was liked by Dawson Cole when he was still in school. However, Amanda has married while away from Dawson Cole. After getting married, Amanda has a son named Jared. After getting married, Amanda met again with Dawson at an event invited by Tuck.

"The thought was like a physical blow, and he swore that he would stay with her now as long as he needed it" (Sparks, 2001: 295).

Amanda is also a loyal and patient woman. Even once fell in love with Dawson and found her love again after several years, she never left Frank, her husband, even Frank was a drunk.

"As difficult as the previous months, Amanda could never take the last step to file for divorce" (Sparks, 2011: 327).

3.1.2.1.3 Tuck's

Tuck is Dawson's best friend. He made Dawson meet Amanda again after a long time. Tuck plans to meet Dawson and Amanda in the garage, which is also the workshop where Dawson works.

"It took a few seconds before he understood what Dawson was thinking - that Tuck had clearly been planning this little reunion all this time" (Sparks, 2011: 56).

Besides, Tuck is also loyal to his wife, Clara. After his wife died, he proved his loyalty by keeping the house where they lived together. Before Tuck died, he wrote letters to Dawson and Amanda. In his letter, Tuck said that Dawson and Amanda's love was similar to his love for Clara.

“ I promised him. And nothing, not even down in the Pacific, is enough to stop me from saving it” (Sparks, 2011: 188).

Tuck is also a generous man. He worked not only to make money but also to help people. It was proven when Tuck repaired Morgan Tanner's car.

“A few weeks later, when I finally came back to pick up my car, he didn't charge me anywhere near what I thought he was going to do, and I was amazed by his job” (Sparks, 2011: 120).

3.1.2.2 The setting of the Story

3.1.2.2.1 Tuck's Garage House

This is a place where Dawson is doing his works and meet Amanda. They spend time together in this place.

Often he would be waiting for her, but sometimes he'd awaken to her nudging him as she joined him on the mat had unrolled on the floor of the garage office.

“Tuck had always understood that Dawson was the real reason she’d come to visit, especially in the beginning”. (Sparks, 2011: 51)

It was like home for Dawson.

“It was also home, and though many of the memories were painful, it was here where Tuck had befriended him and it was here where he’d met Amanda.” (Sparks, 2011: 55).

3.1.2.2.2 Oriental

Oriental is a city and a place where Dawson and Amanda live and have a relationship. The home has many memories for Dawson and Amanda because Dawson and Amanda first met, had a relationship, and broke up. Oriental is also a place to meet again after a long time; they separated.

“Though they initially tried to conceal the relationship, Oriental was a small town, and people inevitably began to whisper. One by one, her friends withdrew, and it was only a matter of time before her parents found out.” (Sparks, 2011: 29).

3.1.2.2.3 School Laboratory

The school lab was the first time Dawson had the opportunity to speak with Amanda. When Dawson and Amanda are doing their research and Dawson has the chance to talk to Amanda. After talking to Amanda, Dawson thought that Amanda was not arrogant, even from a wealthy family.

“As they labored over test tubes and studied together for test that semester, he realized that she was nothing like he’d imagine she would be.” (Sparks, 2011: 27).

3.1.2.3 Event that Happened in the Story

3.1.2.3.1 Going Home

Dawson and Amanda finally returned to the oriental because of Tuck's death. That's where Dawson and Amanda met, who had been

separated for a long time and were reunited with different circumstances because Amanda was married and had children.

“Then, out of the blue on a warm afternoon in mid-June, he received a phone call, and memories of the past rose anew. Dawson had been on leave for almost nine weeks. For the first time in nearly twenty years, he was finally going home. The thought made him uneasy, but he knew he had no choice. Tuck had been more than just a friend; he’d been like a father.” (Sparks, 2011: 17).

3.1.2.3.2 Driving car

Amanda and her husband went to her tuck's house, which is in oriental. When at home Tuck's Amanda and her husband met Dawson. After leaving Tuck's house Amanda and her husband drove from where she lived with her husband to where her mother lived.

“Amanda stepped out of her car and surveyed the shack on the outskirts of Oriental that Tuck called home. She’d been driving for three hours and it felt good to stretch her legs. The tension in her neck and shoulders remained, a reminder of the argument shed had with Frank that morning. He hadn’t understood her insistence on attending the funeral, and looking back, she supposed he had a point.” (Sparks, 2011: 36).

3.1.2.4 Style

There are three aspects of style, and they are diction, figurative language, and Symbol.

3.1.2.4.1 Diction

3.1.2.4.1.1 Swearing

The day was crap. Started like crap, the afternoon and evening were crap, even the weather was crap. Abee felt like he was dying. It had been raining for hours, the water soaking through his shirt, and he couldn’t stop the alternating bouts of shivering and sweating no matter how hard he tried. (Sparks, 2011, p.180).

The word ‘crap’ is swearing about the condition in the sentence.

3.1.2.4.2 Figurative Language

Thousands of them, a meadow of fireworks stretching nearly to the steps of the cottage, a sea of red and orange and purple and blue and yellow nearly waist deep, rippling in the gentle breeze. (Sparks, 2011, p., 156).

The text which is underlined is a metaphor. The text above has meant that the fireworks meadow has a shape similar to a meadow.

His hand fit perfectly within hers, like the missing piece of a puzzle she had been waiting to find. (Sparks, 2011, p.166)

The sentence above is a simile that means a figure of speech involving comparing one thing to another thing.

3.1.2.4.3 Symbol

Symbolism isn’t used throughout the novel. However, Sparks uses a few symbols that provide insight into Dawson’s world.

Dr. Bonner’s ghost. (Sparks, 2011, p.3)

The symbolism above means Dawson’s inability to forget the past, which eventually leads him to his fate.

Tuck firework flowers. (Sparks, 2011, p. 156-157)

The symbolism above means Tuck expressive love for his wife and how explosive their love was.

3.1.1.3 Commitment

The meaning of commitment is a relationship that involves feelings that direct someone to stay with someone and move towards a common goal. Commitment to Yourself and Your Relationship The component of love commitment refers to two aspects, there is a commitment that someone loves the

other and a commitment to maintain their love. Commitment in establishing relationships can also be clearly seen from the contents of this novel. However, the commitment that seems to be in this novel refers more to Dawson's commitment to maintain his love only for Amanda even though Amanda has been married to someone else.

The commitment between Amanda and Dawson can be seen by the act of their both even after break up. Dawson still has no girlfriend and no desire to marry. While Amanda, even after she has husband and children, she is still kind to Dawson. From the story, we can see that love is not only a direct action but also an indirect action. To love someone there is no need to be with her/him, but we can still give our love indirectly by supporting him/her. In Dawson case, the commitment he gives to Amanda is by donating his organs to Amanda's children to keep them alive. Even if Dawson can not have Amanda to be his wife, to be a woman he loves, he can still show his love to Amanda till the very end.

Dawson still considers Amanda to be his one and only true love, even though he did know that she is married and has children. Even their love is tragic, the fact that Dawson saved Alan's life and also gives Jared's a new life shows the commitment between him and Amanda and also Dawson give the best of him for Amanda.

"she'd made some calls to confirm her suspicions. Dawson, she'd learned, had been taken off life support at Carolina East Regional Medical Center late Monday night. He'd been kept alive long after doctors knew he would never recover, because he was an organ donor. Dawson, she knew, had saved Alan's life but in the end, he'd saved Jared's as well. And for her that meant... everything" (Sparks, 2011:292).

3.1.3 The Reasons Why the Authors Addressed the Issue

When Nicholas Sparks' began writing this novel, he wanted to focus on the middle-aged characters of people in their forties who started to face the "what-if" questions and who

started to guess the choices they chose made when they were young. For Amanda, the story itself, what would happen if she married the man she loved more than anyone else?

He first used a funeral to bring old friends together in an ancient manuscript that was not finished yet, but he used it again at *The Best of Me* because it suited this character. When someone dies, it raises the what-if question - it makes you look long and hard on the life you live in a way that I think is important for Amanda and Dawson's growth throughout the book. With these big questions in mind, the story began to develop in his head and, finally, on the page.

3.2 Discussion

After searching for some of the findings above, researchers tried to analyze these findings using a sociological approach by Renne Wellek and Austin Warren. Researchers found that of the three main principles of a sociological theory proposed by Renne Wellek and Austin Warren, researchers concluded that the sociology of literary works became one of the principles that relied most on the problem. The sociology of literary works becomes the most suitable principle related to the issue being discussed in this study. Literature itself is used as a social document where it can be made to produce an outline of social history and the things contained therein social reality that occurs in society.

Romantic love is an expressive and pleasant feeling of emotional attraction towards others related to love. In the context of romantic relationships, love usually implies a strong expression of romantic love or a deep and strong desire for an emotional or romantic relationship. That can be proven by the struggle of romantic love between Dawson and Amanda in the novel. So it can be concluded that romantic love became the main problem at that time, so that it became the reason for Nicholas Sparks to add romantic relationships as the main problem in the novel titled *The Best of Me*. So, When Nicholas Sparks wrote this novel, he wanted to focus on the middle-aged characters of people in their forties who really began to face the "what-if" questions and who began to guess their choices made when they were young. For Amanda, the story itself, what would happen if she married the man she loved more than anyone else? He used a funeral first to bring old friends together in an ancient manuscript that wasn't finished yet, but he

used it again at *The Best of Me* because it suited this character. When someone dies, it raises the what-if question - it makes you look long and hard on the life you live in a way that I think is important for Amanda and Dawson's growth throughout the book. With these big questions in mind, the story began to develop in his head and, finally, on the page.

These things encourage writer Nicholas Spark to write a novel called *The Best of Me* by adding romantic love relationships as the central theme of this novel. It is intended that readers, especially adolescents, understand that they need harmonious interactions and relationships. Please note that loyalty in loving someone is required in a romantic love relationship.

Based on the theory of sociology, the writer is interested in bringing up stories with character about adolescent. Most of this literary works are about teenagers. The writer also wants to show that the romantic love story between Dawson and Amanda. Starting from intimacy, passion, and commitment in the deep story of Dawson and Amanda relationship. Even though Dawson and Amanda have been separated for 20 years, their love is still cool, even though Amanda already married and has children. Dawson and Amanda still love each other and keep their love alive. Dawson is willing to sacrifice for anything for Amanda even though Amanda already has a husband and children.

4. CLOSING

Based on the previous chapter's analysis, researchers find three conclusions for answers to problem statements.

First, three romantic love characters are depicted in the novel: the passion for being with loved ones, intimate relationships between partners, commitment to them, and their relationship. Passion for mingling with loved ones to the source of motivation arises from having a romantic relationship. This component also leads to romance, physical attraction, sexual enhancement, and related phenomena in romantic love relationships. Intimate relationships between partners refer to feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bond in a love relationship. Thus including feelings that can provide a sense of warmth and affection in having a romantic relationship. The latter is a commitment to themselves and their relationship, and it refers to a commitment to love others and a commitment to

maintaining that love. Second, romantic relationships are depicted in the novel through the characters in the story, the story's setting, and some events that occur in the story. In setting the story, researchers find place settings. The place setting itself includes school, at the tuck house and the park. In the event, the researcher also found two plot / romantic relationship events described in the novel as follows; at school and tuck's house. Third, Nicholas Sparks' wrote this novel, and he wanted to focus on the middle-aged characters of people in their forties who began to face the "what-if" questions and who began to guess the choices they chose made when they were young. For Amanda, the story itself, what would happen if she married the man she loved more than anyone else?

He used a funeral first to bring old friends together in an ancient manuscript that wasn't finished yet, but he used it again at *The Best of Me* because it suited this character. When someone dies, it raises the what-if question - it makes you look long and hard on the life you live in a way that I think is important for Amanda and Dawson's growth throughout the book. With these big questions in mind, the story began to develop in his head and, finally, on the page.

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